

Interview H0235: Surkhang Wangchen Gelek [tib. zur khang dbang chen dge legs], (USA, 1967) : Part No. 7 of 7

The interviewee was one of the most important Tibetan government officials in modern Tibetan history. He served as a Kashag or Cabinet Minister (Kalön) from 1943-1959. In this interview he talks about the appointment of Pandatsang Tobgye as a military commander (Rupön) in Tibetan Kham in Traya and Mankham and the revolt he started which led to the attempted arrest of his older brother in Lhasa. He also talks about the Targye Gompa incident and the agreement he [Surkhang] negotiated with the Chinese to rebuild that monastery.

In 1932, just before the Dalai Lama passed away, he was thinking that Tibet needed military strength [tib. drag po'i shugs] and he made new soldiers and did a lot of things. But he didn't want to have many Tibetan soldiers in Kham because he thought that it will be good to set up some [Khamba](#) leaders from among the Khambas and leave soldiers for them. This was because in the past, no matter how many soldiers they left in Kham, since the Khambas didn't like them, they lost when they make war with the Chinese. Therefore, the Dalai Lama [using English] changed the policy of Tibet and started a new policy to make the Khambas defend Kham by appointing the leaders from among the Khambas. And the first [using English] example of this [to appoint a Khamba] was [Pandatsang](#). He was a big trader and the Khambas in his place also liked him. So he [Dalai Lama] [using English] specially gave him the title of Rupön, but not the title of Depön.

Q

Was he a Kudrak (government official) then?

A

No.

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Q

Where was [Pandatsang](#) located in Kham?

A

In Mankham [tib. smar khams]. In Mankham they had a separate entity called the 18 Sogde [pönpo](#) [tib. sog sde dpon po bco bgyad] and [Pandatsang](#) belonged to one of these. When they heard that [Pandatsang](#) got the leader position, all the Khambas were glad. So [Pandatsang](#) was put in charge of 700 Traya [tib. brag g.yab] soldiers. Traya was the area neighboring Mankham and there were also about 150 soldiers from Mankham under him.

Q

Which son was he?

A

He was the fourth son [of the [Pandatsang](#) family]. The eldest son, called Nyima [tib. nyi ma], held the rank of Letsenpa in Dewashung [the Tibetan government] for having done [government] trading. The second son was [Panda](#) Yamphel [tib. yar 'phel] who later became a Dzasa. At that time, he didn't have a government position and was staying in Kalimpong. The third son, Raga [tib. rab dga'] got separated from the [Pandatsang](#) family and lived with his wife. He is now in Kalimpong. The fourth son, Tobgye [tib. stobs rgyas], was the one appointed as Rupön and was sent to Kham. So the Khambas were very glad about this.

If the Dalai Lama hadn't passed away, he would have appointed another person from Gonjo [tib. go 'jo] and made [a unit of] Gonjo soldiers. In Gonjo, there were 9 [using English] villages which were called the 9 pönkhag [tib. dpon khag] [chiefdoms]. Similarly, he might have appointed someone like Jagö Tomden [tib. bya rgos stobs ldan] in Derge [tib. sde dge]. If he had appointed them, the Khambas would have become very strong. This new policy was started, and [Tobgye] was living in Mankham.

In a place located above where Tobgye lived, there was an artillery regimental headquarters of the Tibetan government called the [Chadang](#) Magar [tib. cha dang dmag sgar]. And above that, there was the [Trapchi](#) Magar [Trapchi Regimental headquarters] whose Depön was Shelkar Lingpa [tib. shel dkar gling pa]. At that time, he [Tobgye] was staying there nicely and there was no talk [of difficulties] at all.

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But in 1933 when the Dalai Lama passed away in Lhasa, probably in the 1st or 2nd lunar month, it was well known that [Pandatsang](#) will be arrested today or tomorrow or day after tomorrow. This was because [Pandatsang](#) had very good [relations] with Kujar. When it was well known that [Pandatsang](#) will be arrested, probably Pandatsang's people in Lhasa might have sent a message to Kham saying, "We are in a very dangerous situation, so what shall we do? Probably we have to flee." Tobgye was a very brave person and he discussed on the sly with the Khambas [a plan] to make a [using English] [Khamba](#) revolution and set up a Khamba's government. In the beginning, he didn't have the thought of going to China, because the Khambas had many guns and he saw that the Tibetan Government didn't have much strength. So he thought of starting a government of Khambas themselves and then making friendly relations (tib. thünlam [mthun lam]) both with Dewashung and China, and staying in between these two. I heard that this was the original plan [tib. dang po'i 'char gzhi] of [Pandatsang](#).

When they discussed this, first they had to destroy the Tibetan regiment (in Kham). Since he didn't have the means to destroy it, he said [to the Tibetan regiment] that our [new] [Khamba](#) soldiers do not know well the [military] [using English] band music and because you have a very good band with bugles and drums, so please teach us.

Q

To which Regiment (magar) did he say this?

A

He told it to the [Chadang](#) Magar.

Q

Was the Depön Shelkar Lingpa?

A

Shelkar Lingpa was [Trapchi](#) Depön. The [Chadang](#) Regiment's Depön was Norgye Nangpa [tib. nor rgyas nang pa] which is the family of Geshe La [a teacher at the University of Washington at the time of the interview]. So they said [using English] welcome, and he [Tobgye] sent 4 soldiers. Among them, one soldier was probably a brave one and was like his [Tobgye's] heart [a very close friend]. He was spying on where the Depön and Rupön were staying and such things and he was giving the information [to

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Tobgye]. He [Tobgye] said we should do that [attack] when the Depön is not there. So one day when Norgye Nangpa [Nornang] went to the monastery called Tsa Chöten [tib. tsha ba mchod rten] which was located at a holy mountain like [using English] Mount Ranier. This was for religious purposes and not for taking a walk.

Q

Do you know the month?

A

This was probably in the 2nd or 3rd of 2nd lunar month. They had arrested Kujar 2 months before that. At that time, it took a long time to send letters to Kham because it is a long distance. When the Depön was not there, he [Tobgye] got the good opportunity [he wanted] and he prepared his soldiers to rebel. He [Tobgye] told his soldiers to open all the doors of the Regiment (magar). Then his [Tobgye] soldiers secretly hid. He had already written many letters of [using English] publicity.

Q

You mean letters for sending to the other places?

A

Yes. For saying, "Rise up. All Khambas rise up. [tib. longs shog longs shog khams pa sgang ga longs shog]. His plan was to go to Chamdo right away and expel the Kudraks and put them in [using English] concentration camps. At that time, all the people in the Regiment were asleep and the doors were closed. So at that time, the 4 people he had secretly left opened the doors while all the other people were asleep. Then the Khambas attacked all of a sudden and shot them and killed many people. Most of them [using English] unconditionally surrender and the Depön fled. But they couldn't handle [tib. glags 'khel ma song] the [Trapchi](#) Regiment. Although there were 500 soldiers in the [Chadang](#) Regiment, at that time there were only about 200 soldiers in the Regiment as they had stationed [their troops in groups of] 50-30 in other places. These soldiers heard about this and since they had guns, they [Khambas] could not take over those [other] places, but they could take over all the places in Mankham, and they also took over Dzogang [tib. mdzo sgang]. The Dzongpön was extremely scared and ran away, and they appointed a [Khamba](#) called Thöndrub [tib. don grub] as the new Dzongpön.

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When they heard the news in Chamdo, many Regiments that were in Chamdo fought against them [the Khambas] and they sent a letter to the Tibetan government saying, "Pandatsang has rebelled here." When they received this letter in the Kashag, nobody knew about it and even [Pandatsang](#) didn't know about that, so the [Pandatsang](#) household was staying in relaxed [tib. lhod lhod] and inattentive [tib. snang med] manner.

Q

Pandatsang in Lhasa didn't know about the rebellion?

A

They didn't know that because we didn't have wireless and telegraph [facilities]. When they received this letter in the Kashag, they went to the Regent, Reting Labrang, and discussed it. If they had handled this well, they would have called [Panda](#) Yamphel, who was the head of the household (jinda [tib. sbyin bdag]) and the eldest son [still living], to the Kashag during the daytime and arrested him. Then there would have been no talk at all [tib. skad cha khyon nas yod ma red]. However, they didn't do that because [Pandatsang](#) had many weapons and many very strong [Khamba](#) servants so they thought that it will not be okay if they didn't keep it secret from them [now] and then fight a kind of battle [tib. dmag rgyag] against them [Pandatsang] and arrest him. And they didn't dare to arrest him. So the Kashag and the regent made preparations and discussed and decided to arrest [Pandatsang](#) that night. So they gave orders to the Regiment and the Depöns, the mayor (tib. [mipön](#) [mi dpon]) and the police, telling them that they are going to imprison Yamphel in the Potala where they incarcerate political prisoners. They gave the order to the [Tseja](#) office officials to wait there because they were in charge of that. They told them that [Pandatsang](#) will be coming there. They also decided to lock up the [Pandatsang](#) family members like his wife and such people in prison in Lhasa and they also got prepared to lock up the servants and other important personnel of [Pandatsang](#) in the [Shöl](#) legung. Then they wrote many edicts to be sent through [adrung](#) (government messengers) to Nagchuka, Phari, Gyantse and Shigatse and to seal all the branch traders of [Pandatsang](#) and arrest their heads. At around 7 p.m, they sent soldiers in front of Pandatsang's House and they surrounded the house.

At this time, [Pandatsang](#) didn't know [about the rebellion] so when they heard that soldiers had arrived, [Pandatsang](#) wondered what that was for. Because there was a lot of talk about [Lungshar](#) and because they also had many enemies, they closed their door and

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didn't open it at all. Then the mayor and those people in charge of law and order knocked on the door and said, "The Kashag has sent us to call you people to the Kashag. So open the door and come out." [Pandatsang](#) replied to this saying, "We are subjects (miser) of Dewashung. You didn't call us to the Kashag during the daytime and now at night you surrounded our house with soldiers and call us. This is terrible work and I do not trust you. You will do something bad, so I can't come out at all and I am not going to open the door." [tib. 'di sdug cag gi las ka yin tsang/ nga yid rtsa ba nas 'ches kyi mi 'dug/ khyed rang tshos sdug cag gi las ka byed kyi red/ nga rtsa ba nas yong thub kyi ma red/ sgo phye gi min]. So they didn't open the door.

There were many shops under Pandatsang's house [on the ground floor] and one of these shops had a door facing inside the Pandatsang's house. So the soldiers were thinking of going inside the house through that shop. Some soldiers entered the shop and were about to enter Pandatsang's house through a window. [Pandatsang](#) had given guns to all of his 20-30 servants and all the servants had saddled their horses and were ready to flee.

One of Pandatsang's traders called Lobsang Gyentsen [tib. blo bzang rgyal mtshan] was then a servant. Now he has come to Kalimpong. He loaded his mauser pistol and accidentally fired some bullets making the sound 'hrata hrata' that hit Pandatsang's jinda's horse, So something bad happened inside. However, when the soldiers heard this [noise], all of them ran away. Then they said that there are soldiers here so servants went inside the shop and told them, "We are going to station some servants carrying guns here. If you let the Dewashung soldiers enter the shop, we will kill your [jinda](#)."

Pandatsang said, "You didn't call me during the daytime and called me at night. This is a violation of Dewashung's rules. What has happened? I don't know the reason? Why did you do this at night."

Q

If they called him during the daytime, he would come, right?

A

Yes. They made a foolish calculation (tib. gugtsi [lkugs rtsis]) because [Pandatsang](#) was very strong. There were many traders outside who were Pandatsang's friend so they took some methods and were able to get into the shop slowly, even though there were soldiers guarding it. They talked with [Pandatsang](#) back and forth. Outwardly, [Pandatsang](#) said that

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he is not going to surrender to Dewashung, but internally the traders went to the Kudrak and spent money [bribes] and told them that it is not at all good to arrest [Pandatsang]. And they told a lot to the representatives of [Sendregasum](#), because at that time, the pro-Lungshar representatives were coming to the Tsondu because [Lungshar](#) was still there.

At that time, [Trimön](#) [tib. khri smon] was afraid because he had one enemy, [Lungshar](#). Many Kudrak met and were saying that Dewashung is not doing the right thing, and if [Pandatsang](#) becomes Dewashung's enemy and if many people rebel against Dewashung, [Lungshar](#) will become powerful. [Lungshar](#) was very smart and he was thinking that if [Pandatsang](#) surrenders, Lungshar's strength will decrease, so he sent a person and told [Pandatsang](#), "You don't need to be afraid. So you must stay steady (tib. tempo [brtan po]. This talk will come to the Tsondu and we will help you to become good again because you are not to be blamed. We are the same. We are the ones who were treated nicely by the Dalai Lama. So if some of us have a problem, we will not stay [idly] by and watch you." [Pandatsang](#), therefore, became kind of brave (tib. pakyé lang [dpa' skyed langs]) and acted arrogantly (tib. trog trog che [krog krog byas]) and didn't open the door and said that if the soldiers entered inside, they will shoot them." And they also sent their friends and bribed the Kudrak in the Kashag with gold and money.

Q

This is for telling them not to send the soldiers in, right?

A

Yes. Then [Trimön](#) was thinking that he didn't care about the name of Dewashung because he could get a bribe of gold and on the other side, if he had enmity with [Pandatsang](#), there was a danger from [Lungshar](#). So they gave the soldiers the order, "Do not enter [Pandatsang](#) right now." On the next day, they held a Tsondu Assembly meeting and told the Tsondu, "Last night we decided to arrest [Pandatsang](#) because they [the brother] rebelled in Kham, so what would be better"

Q

What kind of Tsondu was it?

A

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It was a Full Tsondu (gyendzom). At the Tsondu, some Kudraks said, "Rebelling against Dewashung is very bad, so we must arrest them. Otherwise, it will be shameful for Dewashung." However, [Pandatsang](#) had already bought the representatives of [Sendregasum](#) and they said, "You are stupid! [tib. lkugs pa red]. [Pandatsang](#) is rich, but all of his [using English] property is in India and they have a house in Kalimpong and all of his money is in India. If you arrest him here, you can only get the person, but not his money. There are a lot of Dewashung's accounts that should be cleared [by him], so we will suffer a loss. So we should not seal [Pandatsang](#). His younger brother rebelled in Kham and this is a separate matter. The elders brother is saying here that he doesn't know about that. So according to the Tsondu's opinion, it is not okay to arrest and seal [Pandatsang](#)." On the next day, the soldiers were still there.

Q

Were those who said this the pro-Lungshar people?

A

Yes. [Lungshar](#) himself didn't talk. He was quiet and just implied that what the Kudraks said was right. But the monk representatives were powerful.

Q

In what month was that?

A

That was about the 2nd month. Then [Pandatsang](#) became arrogant.

Q

Did the Tsondu confirm that?

A

Yes, and the Tsondu said do not seal [Pandatsang](#) [his house]. [Sendregasum](#) said that the [Pandatsang](#) people [in Lhasa] are not to be blamed and they will be the guarantor for [Pandatsang](#). Then the Kashag said, "We will not arrest [Pandatsang](#), but they must hand over all their guns to the government and must clear all the [trading] accounts owed to the government. In the future, after settling the [case of the] people in Kham, if it is found

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that you didn't have any discussion with the people in Kham, then you will become white [innocent]. If it is found that you have committed a crime, then we will punish you later. Until then, [Sendregasum](#) must guarantee that [Pandatsang](#) will not get lost [flee].

At that time they were assuming that they could arrest the people in Kham. On the next day, the soldiers returned and [Pandatsang](#) handed over the guns to the Kashag. They must have had 100 guns. They might have handed over the worse ones because it was their choice what kind of guns to hand over and nobody was watching them. They also signed the agreement [tib. gan rgya] and told the [government] to remove the seals and then it was settled in Lhasa. However, it was not settled in Kham and Dewashung sent many soldiers from Chamdo and Derge and Traya etc., and they fought battles.

Q

Altogether, how many [Khamba](#) soldiers were there in Kham?

A

There were 850 soldiers and all of their guns were good rifles.

Q

They also sent Tibetan soldiers, right?

A

They might have sent about 3,000 or 4,000 soldiers like from the Nyadang Regiment and the [Jadang](#) [tib. ja dang] Regiment which had about 500 soldiers. There were many of these regiments.

Q

At that this time, did the Khambas to whom Tobgye sent the letters help [Pandatsang](#)?

A

Most of them didn't and couldn't help. Only Dzognag helped them. The Dzongpön fled when he heard that [Pandatsang](#) was coming and the Khambas appointed a [new] Dzongpön. They [Khambas] couldn't come to other places because the government's soldiers arrived quickly, but they didn't flee right away and they fought a little bit. Since there were many Dewashung soldiers, most of them went near the Yangtse River to block

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the road that would allow them from going to China. [Pandatsang](#) knew that they had gone to block the road and they thought that they couldn't handle them [the Dewashung soldiers] so [Pandatsang](#) took his soldiers and fled through the ferry site called Jisung [gang](#) [?]. They took five of Dewashung's big cannons. Since they didn't know how to fire the cannons, they also took 15-20 soldiers who know how to fire cannons and left the remaining soldiers there.

They fled to Ba [tib. 'ba'] where the soldiers were under Sichuan's Liu Zijian who guarded that place and [Pandatsang](#) stayed in Ba and told the main Chinese Government that the [Tibetan] government is bullying us, so I am staying here. However, he didn't have the thought to stay there without taking revenge against Dewashung. So he submitted a petition to the Central Chinese Government led by Chiang Kaishek saying, "Ba is a [Khamba](#) area, so it is not right for Liu Zijian to use his power there. So please allow to us set up a [Khamba](#) government." The Chinese Government would not say okay right away. At that time, Liu Zijian had about 500-600 soldiers who belonged to the Chinese Government and he [Panda Tobgye] also was part of the Chinese Government. So they stayed like equal status [tib. gcig pa] in a very friendly manner.

However, [Pandatsang](#) was thinking of demolishing [tib. med pa bzo] the Chinese and at that time, a Chinese Regimental Commander [ch. tuanzhang] who had a pretty wife was staying there with a small son like Andre [a 3 year old boy]. One day, [Pandatsang](#) threw a party and invited the Tuanzhang as they usually would invite each other to parties. The Tuanzhang came to the party and he was served beer and food very elaborately, Pandatsang's soldiers took out guns and showed a kind of angry look, but [Pandatsang](#) didn't show an angry look and told the Tuanzhang, "You are my friend and we have a very good [relationship], but we can't get along well with Liu Zijian's government because Ba is Khamba's land. It is not right for the Chinese to stay here". Then he told a lie and said, "There is an order from the Chinese Government. So today, I am going to take over the Ba area. I have the letter from the Central Chinese Government allowing me to take it over".

Although, there were some letters from the Chinese Government because when he sent them letters there would be some acknowledgement letters [from them], but he didn't have a letter giving him permission to take over that place. He [Pandatsang] didn't show the letter and just said, "There is a letter allowing me to take over this place, so it is not okay for you Tuanzhang to leave this place today [kept him as a hostage]. So please collect the guns of your soldiers [order them to turn the guns in to Tobgye], and when you return, we will not harm your wealth and we will send you back to China nicely".

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The Tuanzhang said, "Oh! This is a very big matter. This is not a matter for the two of us who are friends. This is a talk that concerns the governments. If our main boss (tib. [jinda](#) [sbyin bdag]) has already given you a letter, I don't need to look at it because I trust you. I am a Chinese, so it doesn't make any difference for me because I can stay in another place and become a head leader (pönpo) and command these soldiers. I don't want to stay in Ba all the time because I have been here for many years. However, my subordinate leaders (pönpo) like the Rupön, the company leaders (ch. lianzhang) and platoon leaders (ch. paizhang) are all very bad people and they are all strong ones. If you keep me in here and collect the guns, they will fight a battle immediately and they will kill you and me and many people will die. Instead of doing this, I have a method. Do you believe me? Then he [Pandatsang] asked "What method do you have?"

Then he said, "If I say that I am going back to collect the guns, they [the Khambas] won't believe me because they will think that I am lying and will run away and then fight a battle. I know that they won't believe in me, but you know how I cherish my wife and my son. So I will call my wife and son here and leave them with you, and I will go back and deceive the military officers and collect all the bolts of the rifles so the soldiers can't fire them. Then I will come back and then you take over the power. This will be easy. However, after you got the power, you must take an oath by putting the deities of Tibet on your head that you will not harm our wealth and send us back by arranging the horse corvée, etc. If you do this, I will trust you."

Pandatsang was very glad to hear this and said, "Well then, it is okay." So the Tuanzhang wrote a letter summoning his wife and son to come. The wife thought that she was being called to a party and came dressed up with her son. [Pandatsang](#) went through the motions of serving them food and then the Tuanzhang said, "We must do the work fast so I am going back." and he left.

As soon as he got back [to his regiment], there was a lama called Lakha Lama [tib. la kha bla ma] in the Ba Chöde [tib. chos sde] Monastery, which was a very powerful monastery. It was like Targye Gompa [tib. dar rgyas dgon pa] where there were about 1,000 monks. All the people in Ba had faith in that lama who was a Gelugpa. All the people in Ba had the name Kelsang [tib. skal bzang] because the lama's name was Kelsang Thubten [tib. thub bstan] and he gave the name Kelsang to all the people. The Tuanzhang was called Fu Tuanzhang [deputy regimental commander]. He was a very knowledgeable person and he sent someone to Lakha Lama and told him to, "Please come down to me because I have

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a very important thing to ask you." Lakha Lama didn't know what had happened and since he was very close to the Tuanzhang, the lama came to his regiment with many servants.

As soon as the lama came inside the regiment, he [Tuanzhang] made the soldiers stand in formation and then he said, "Today I was invited to a party thrown by [Pandatsang](#). After he served the food, he told me to hand over my guns. So I deceived him and asked him whether it will be okay if I leave my wife and son as hostages. He he said it was okay. Therefore, I left my wife and son there. I hope that if he kills my wife and son, that will be my great accomplishment for the state and my son will be very famous. I want them to be killed. I will take a new bride, and being a government official, I am not allowed to think about my home. For the sake of the government, I have already thrown away my wife and son. For this, I came back, so all of you must fight a battle against Pandatsang"

All said, "This is good." Then one of the older military officers said, "You are doing this for the government, but shouldn't we try to take back your wife and son and then fight the battle. Wouldn't it be better to do that? Then he [the Tuanzhang] said, "Do not talk in such a shortsighted manner (tib. samlo chung chung [bsam blo chung chung]). We must arrest [Pandatsang](#) himself and his wife and the children. I don't care even my wife and the son will die. I have already made the decision. And we have the lama who can [using English] control the whole area of Ba. If the Bapa people do something, I am going to kill Lakha Lama"

Then he told Lakha Lama to call the better off people of Ba. Usually, when Lakha Lama called, all would come and although all the better off Bapa people had already become friends with [Pandatsang](#), they were saying the lama, [rimpoche](#), will be killed, so what shall we do? It is not okay to go to the Regiment, but since the lama called them, all of them were going to go to the Regiment. As soon as the Bapa people arrived there, the Tuanzhang said, "This is a matter of your own land where [Pandatsang](#) is bullying the Bapa people. You Bapa people are independent and not Pandatsang's subjects (miser). ... [unclear] Today, we should destroy [Pandatsang](#) and the Bapa people said that is okay. [The Tuanzhang said], "If you don't fight well in the battle and we lose the battle, we will kill [rimpoche](#)."

Pandatsang was waiting for the Tuanzhang to come back with the rifle bolts and was thinking that he would never leave his wife and son. When it was becoming dark, he [Tuanzhang] took the soldiers from Ba and his Chinese soldiers and fought a severe battle against [Pandatsang](#). In the beginning, I heard that [Pandatsang](#) was firing some guns and then all of them fled. When he fled, he left the lady as a way [method] for all of them not to

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be killed, but he took the son. He left the 5 Dewashung cannons and about 100-200 loads of ammunition which were given [to him] by Dewashung and also left some wealth and fled to an empty place called Pokhog located on the border of Litang.

Then [the Tuanzhang] got his wife back though he didn't get his son. And he got 5 cannons and a large amount of rifle bullets and then he waited there. He [the Tuanzhang] sent some people who were close to [Pandatsang](#) to talk as mediators and to sign a treaty not to fight each other. His purpose was to get his son back, so he said, "If you hand over my son, I will give you some bullets". [Pandatsang](#) had many guns, but didn't have many bullets because the Tibetan government got the bullets from India. They didn't have those bullets in China because the guns were not the same. So [Pandatsang](#) thought that the son was kind of useless and he exchanged the son for 30 trunks of bullets.

Q

Didn't he [the Tuanzhang] think that they will use the bullets and fight back?

A

He knew that they will not come back. However, when [Pandatsang](#) fled, they couldn't take the cannons and the shells, so they threw the shells in the river and destroyed the important [using English] springs of the cannon and left the big part of the cannon.

The Chinese were strange and they sent a letter to Chamdo saying, "I have got your cannons in my hands and we are little bit shortage of grain for our soldiers so would you exchange the cannons for grain? It is useless for us". So Dewashung said [using English] "okay, we will exchange it and asked the price and they paid 1,000 [khe](#) of grain for each cannon."

Q

Wow!

A

That was cheap then. So they paid 7,500 [khe](#) of grain for 5 cannons.

Q

The cannons were useless to them, right?

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A

They didn't have the shells and the important parts, but Dewashung had many parts because there was another Artillery Regiment in Chamdo where they has the same parts. Then [Pandatsang](#) fled to the empty place called Pokhog and they opened new fields there and the 700 [Traya] soldiers and about 100 soldiers from Mankham settled there with their wives and children and it became a new area [tib. lung pa] called Pokhog. After that [Pandatsang](#) stayed there.

However, in 1951, when the communists came he [Pandatsang] surrendered to the communists right away and the communists told him, "Oh! You are a great and very good person" and he was selected as the highest representative in the Chamdo office. Later, when they set up the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region which was a joint operation of Dewashung, [Tashilhunpo](#) and Kham, there was [Je](#) Jigme [tib. ces 'jigs med] from [Tashilhunpo](#) and Ngabö from Tibet and [Panda](#) Tobgye from Kham who were appointed as the three secretary-generals (tib. [Trunyichemmo](#)) by the communists.

The older brother of [Pandatsang](#) was in Lhasa then and was not a [shungshab](#), but when [Panda](#) Tobgye fled and the matter was kind of settled, then Dewashung did an investigation regarding what problems were there, but they didn't have anybody to ask because they had fled. So Dewashung made [Pandatsang](#) [in Lhasa] pay the losses of the wealth in Kham [because of the rebellion]. They had to pay 1,000 [dotse](#) to Norgye Nangpa and paid 800 [dotse](#) to a monk official, and also paid the soldiers like 50 [dotse](#) or 15 [dotse](#), etc. And they calculated the cost of 500-600 rifles using the price in India which was 62 rupees and 8 ana for each rifle. The total was like several tens of thousands [tib. khri kha shas] of rupees and also calculated the cost of the bullets. Then they fined him 1,000 [sang](#) of gold coins [tib. sersang [gser srang]] for the subjects (miser) who rebelled. They also confiscated all the guns that were collected from [Pandatsang](#). But this was okay for [Pandatsang](#) because there had been a danger that they would lose everything.

After that, [Pandatsang](#) became very close to Reting and Reting was fond of him. They story of how he became a government official (tib. [shungshab](#)) I heard from [Pandatsang](#) himself At that time [Pandatsang](#) was a big trader, but was not a Kudrak (lay aristocrat) of Dewashung. However, everyone regarded him highly because he was rich. One day there was an opera performance in Reting Labrang. On that day [Pandatsang](#) Kungö didn't go, but the ladies (tib. jam [tib. lcam]) went and when they came back the women didn't

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talk much about the performance, but they did talk about who were wearing what kind of ornaments like head-dresses (tib. [patrug](#)) and diamonds, etc.

At the time of the 13th Dalai Lama, the Dalai Lama had made a rule in Tibet wherein the ladies of the high ranking Kudrak can wear ornaments that cost a certain amount, and the ladies of the next ranking Kudraks could wear ornaments that cost less, and the wives of the traders were not allowed to wear head-dresses made from [using English] pearls. Before that, all the rich women were wearing that kind of head-dresses.

So they were talking about so and so ladies like Lady Lhalu [tib. lha klu] who was wearing that kind of ornament and at this [party] an ordinary woman said, "If we are also allowed to wear these how nice it would be. They had the ornaments, but they were not allowed to wear them because of the rule. And they were saying, "If you wear a pearl [patrug](#) [head-dress], how nice it would be? It would be amazing." When Lady [Pandatsang](#) heard that, she said, "You are right. But we are not allowed to wear that." She was showing a little bit of being [using English] sorry.

Pandatsang told me that he thought, "It was a pity! (tib. nyingje [snying rje]). These women want to wear that patru very much, although as for me, it seems tiring and useless." However, then he went to Reting Labrang and said, "My father and my older brother were given the 5th rank title of Letsenpa [tib. las tshan pa] because they worked on trade for Dewashung. So please grant me a title." Reting said [using English] "okay" right away and gave him the Letsenpa title which allowed his wife to wear the pearl [patrug](#). [Pandatsang](#) became a government official (tib. [shungshab](#) [gzhung zhabs]) long after Lungshar's event was settled. Later, Reting promoted [Pandatsang](#) to a fourth rank (rimshi) and appointed him as the Governor-General of [Yadong](#) which was called the [Tromo](#) Jigyab [tib. gro mo spyi khyab]. [Pandatsang](#) served in this position for 7-8 years. Later, he went to India.

The reason why [Pandatsang](#) rebelled was because they heard that their house in Lhasa was going to be sealed and it necessary for the Khambas to have solidarity and make a government.

Q

Did [Panda](#) Tobgye flee right away?

A

No, he fought a little bit and hoped there would be a rebellion from everywhere in Kham.

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Q

But the others didn't fight, right?

A

Yes.

Q

Why?

A

This was because Kham was not homogeneous. If you look at it from outside, it looks like the Khambas are all the same, but some areas were all Gelugpa, some places were all Sakya [tib. sa skya], some were all Nyingma [tib. rnying ma] and some places all were Kagyü [tib. bka' rgyud]. And internally, they fought each other a lot. For example, Chamdo and Traya were like Arabs and Israelis. So when [Pandatsang](#) fought his battle, all of the Khambas didn't have any thoughts of fighting and all were thinking "Now let's leave that alone" (tib. tha yugshog [da dbyugs zhog]).

After the communists came, the Tibetans had solidarity. But before the communists came, they were killing each other and many people were killed. [Pandatsang](#) hoped to have all the Khambas rebel [with him], but they didn't do that at all. At that time, Targye Gompa [which was Gelugpa] and one's like them, liked the Tibetan government were also strong and were acting like the Tibetan government's soldiers. The Tibetan government was paying salaries to about 800 [Targye] monks just like they paid salaries to their own soldiers, and they were carrying guns and were staying liker real soldiers.

Q

They were all Triu [tib. [tre](#) hor] Khambas, right?

A

Yes. But they stayed in Chamdo for a long time as Dewashung's (the Tibetan government's)soldiers [after their monastery was completely destroyed by the Chinese in a conflict between Beri and Targye in 1931]. About 75% of these [Targye monks who fled to Chamdo] lost their celibacy; there were just several [celibate] monks left. the Tibetan

government trusted them a lot and believed that they would fight against the Chinese, but they were extremely lawless (tib. trimey lugmey tsapo [khrims med lugs med tsha po]). They would hunt animals all the time and take away [rape] women and do all kinds of things wantonly. However, Dewashung left them as they were. saying, "They are from Targye Gompa [which was destroyed], poor things!"

Later on, when three Targye Gompa monks went to hunt animals on a mountain, the monks from a small Kagyü Monastery told them they are not allowed to hunt there. There were 20-30 monks in that small monastery and there were only three Targye Gompa monks who were hunting, but since the Targye Gompa monks were arrogant, they replied, "If you don't stay still, we will shoot you." The Kagyü monks didn't have guns, but they had stones and knives while the Targye Gompa monks had guns.

Q

Were the Targye Gompa monks wearing monk's robes?

A

No, they weren't. They wearing all sort of [chupa](#) dresses like soldiers did. They couldn't go back [to their homeland] because they had come [to Chamdo] after revolting against the Chinese and had their land fall under Chinese control. The Kagyü monks thought that since there are only three of them and we have about 30-40 monks, there would not be any problem so probably they pelted the Targye Gompa monks with many stones. The Targye Gompa monks being bad, hada guns and shot one Kagyü monk right there and killed him. The other Kagyü monks, therefore, ran away. Since these [three] Targye Gompa monks couldn't stay in Chamdo [any more], these three fled to Jyekundo [tib. skye rgu mdo] [which was in Qinghai province] where the Chinese were [in control].

The [other] Targye Gompa monks were tough [tib. gyong po], so sent a person who told them [the three] that it is slightly not right to go to the Chinese, so come back and he will report to the Tibetan government and you will not get capital punishment like [using English) hanging. You might have to get whipped a little bit, but this doesn't matter. They were "arrested" by Targye Gompa monks themselves and returned to Chamdo. The government was going to give them 100 lashes as the punishment, but it was going to be very easy lashes [not hitting hard], although usually it was quite hard. The government said, "If it would be other people, they would have to be imprisoned and banished, but

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since they are from Targye Gumpa [where their monastery was destroyed after they sided with the Tibetan government against the Chinese], just whip them 100 times and settle it".

When the government prepared to implement the punishment and prepared the people who will whip them, they told them to call the three Targye Gumpa monks. However, all the Targye Gumpa monks in Chamdo rose up and said. "We are the monks of [Sendregasum](#) [the Big Three Gelugpa Monastic seats in and around Lhasa] and [Sendregasum](#) monks are only allowed to be punished by the [Tsogchen shengo](#) [the top monastic disciplinary officer]. The government is not allowed to whip [Sendregasum](#) monks." This was the rule. If some monks committed [using English] murder and they were expelled from the monastery and handed over to the government, then the government was allowed to whip them. But if they are monks [have not been expelled], it is not allowed to whip them.

Q

How about if a monk is not from the [Sendregasum](#) and was from the monastery of Geshe La [a monk in Seattle]?

A

Probably, it was not allowed to whip the monks from all the monasteries because their own rules were precious (tib. tsawa chempo [rtsa ba chen po]) and powerful from early times because it was religion. When they said that, the Governor-General in Chamdo (the Doji) felt embarrassed because he had already prepared the chairs for the judges and the people holding the whips [at the punishment site]. Then the Targye Gumpa monks came near the gate of the Doji [s compound] holding guns and saying, "If you whip them, we will rebel right now!" They would have done that because they were very strange.

The Doji felt ashamed and thought although we can whip them not very severely [hard], we have to whip them here. However, the Targye Gumpa monks said that they want to whip them in their own place and the two sides didn't agree with each other. At that time, there were six main monastic officials (tib. [lene](#) [las sne]) of Targye Gumpa who were called the Tsone Trug [tib. gtso gnad drug] as well as one [Umdze](#), and one Gegö. These eight monks were the ones who had the power and this placed them in a very difficult situation. They wanted to have the three whipped at the Doji's place because then there will not be trouble for them. but if they said that the monks should be whipped there [the Doji's place], there was a danger that they [the lene] will be killed or beaten by the other

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monks because the monks were thoughtless [tib. bsam blo mi 'dug] and arrogant. So then they [the lene] told them [the Doji], "You should not whip these monks. If you whip them, all the things that Dewashung has done in treating us well until now will have been wasted (tib. trola 'phro brlag]) and these thoughtless people will do things wantonly (tib. sinjang bingjang [zing [chang](#) bing chang])). So just go ahead and whip the eight of us [the lene] right now. We will accept the whipping as their substitute."

The Doji thought that they [the lene] are not be blamed. They [the monks] had already acted arrogantly and we also have acted arrogantly, therefore there should be an agreement to settle this so the Doji told the [lene](#). "You, the [lene](#) must prostrate 100 times to apologize for the monks rushing into the Doji office carrying guns. You do not need to get whipped. As for whipping them [the three], according to the monk's system, whip them in your court. However, a government official (Kudrak) will come to watch." Then the [lene](#) said, "We agree to this." However, this was not known by the other monks. So the [lene](#) and the elderly monks prostrated there and it was settled and the government was okay and kept its reputation [tib. ming]. They [the Doji] made them whip the monks in their own place. Since the [lene](#) were very agitated because the monks had acted so arrogantly, the [lene](#) whipped them so severely that the three monks couldn't stand up; the lashes made them like corpses.

As for the monks, they didn't care if they whip them in the monastery, but it was not okay for them to get whipped at the Doji's place. Then the Doji thought that keeping the Targye Gompa monks like this all the time would be dangerous and one day there will be a big mess (tib. golog [mgo log], so then they sent a letter to Liu Zijian saying, "it has been many years since the Targye Gompa monks have been stayed with us and their monastery was burned down and became a ruin. Why don't we jointly rebuild the monastery and give the Targye Gompa monks some authority there." At that time, Liu Zijian was not friendly with the Central Chinese Government and he wanted to make friends with Tibet to make his position firm (tib. tempo [brtan po]). So he said that it will be okay and he will send a Field Marshall (Luzhang) which was like a Commander above three Tuanzhang (Regimental commanders) and please send a Kudrak representative from Dewashung (a government official from Lhasa). They submitted this petition to Reting Regent and I [Surkhang] was sent down [to talk].

I went to Derge and the Luzhang came up and we gathered in Derge Gönchen [tib. sde dge dgon chen] where there is the king's palace. We held a big meeting for which we sent [using English] invitations to the people from the big monasteries under the Chinese and

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under the Tibetan government and many important people in Kham came. The Chinese only knew Chinese and didn't know Tibetan, so we called Tibetans internally like Jagö Tomden. I treated him kindly and helped him. I took a land tenure document (tib. katen [bka' gtan] from the Tibetan government saying that he and his father were good persons. At that time, whatever we did, Lhasa [the Regent] was saying [using English] okay. So I was very powerful. Therefore, the Chinese didn't have the power and we held the meeting in an equal manner. Although Derge Gönchen was Chinese territory, I took bodyguards and I also had an interpreter and two monk official as staff, as well as a Gyagpön (squad commander of 100) from the Regiment. I stayed for 6 months and we talked many times and finally came to an agreement to build the Targye Gompa monastery. The agreement said, "Since the design should be Tibetan, the Tibetan government shall send the carpenters and we shall hire the skillful ordinary carpenters from China. Unpaid corvée (tib. [ula](#)) laborers shall be called from the different localities in Targye Gompa (the area) like 100-200 people from each place for two months. The money shall be provided by both the Chinese government and the Tibetan government. The Chinese shall not bully the Targye Gompa and the Tibetan government will appoint one of its officials(Kudrak) as the head of Targye Gompa and the monks of the Targye Gompa shall not be allowed to keep guns. However, for guarding the monastery, the Tibetan government shall give them 15 rifles. At that time, Targye Gompa had robbed a lot of wealth worth several thousands of [dotse](#) from another monastery under Chinese territory which was their enemy and among the things they robbed were several loads of turquoise which was kept nicely by Targye Gompa. We shall return back the loads of turquoise and the other things that also cost several thousands of [dotse](#) of Chinese silver that will be collected by the Chinese and Tibetan governments and we shall not give it to Targye Gompa. The Chinese shall not collect taxes from Targye Gompa". These points were agreed upon, so one day we put all of our seals on the agreement together with the seals of the representatives of the big monasteries in Kham.

Then when I told Chamdo to send the Targye Gompa monks back, they sent 200 monks in the first batch. These were very show-offish [dobdo](#) with long beards. Then they sent the others, also in batches of 200 monks, and we built the new monastery which was much better than the previous one. After this, the Tibetan government didn't need to pay the Targye monks salary, but we helped them with lot of money for doing trade. So the monastery became very rich and famous. Later, when the Dalai Lama went to China [in

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1954-55], he came to the Targye Gompa, which had become the best monastery in the Kham area.

Q

Were they best in knowledge?

A

No, in wealth. However they were also very concerned (tib. dangshen [dang zhen]) about knowledge and they paid salaries to all the monks who studied religion because they had a lot of money. They also created a new work unit called [chöra](#) nyerpa [tib. chos gnyer pa] (the steward of the debating grove) who had a large amount of capital, like 5-6 thousand [dotse](#), for paying salary to the monks. And although they were under the Chinese, they also made a paper currency notes for themselves which was called "tea currency notes" [tib. ja'i lor]. Ten tea currency notes could buy a piece of tea. This was used like money and its bank was very stable because Targye Gompa was rich. So when all people keep these notes in their pockets, it was powerful [tib. dbang chen po] like the [using English] traveler's checks. And there were also many monks practicing religion.

Later, when the communists came and the disturbances took place, Targye Gompa was the weakest (tib. shug chungshö [shugs chung shos]) in rebelling because in the past the reason why they were strong was because the [individual] monks didn't have much wealth. [meaning unclear as the recording ended]